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Statistical Commission

Report on the thirty-sixth session (1-4 March 2005)

Economic and Social Council

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Note

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Summary

At its thirty-sixth session, the Statistical Commission:

(a) Took note of the suggestions made by the Bureau of the Commission with respect to the review of its working methods and agreed to implement some procedures on a trial basis for the thirty-sixth session; the Bureau would further analyse the experiences and take them into account in the preparation of the thirty-seventh session;

(b) Adopted a resolution launching the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme; and requested (i) that the United Nations Statistics Division in its role as the secretariat of the Programme act as the umbrella organization for setting standards, providing technical expertise and training and setting priorities as needed and (ii) that the umbrella strategy evolve around regional arrangements to the fullest possible extent and also requested that the Statistics Division proceed with its work on the revision and update of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses*;

(c) Welcomed the excellent comprehensive programme review on energy statistics prepared by Statistics Norway; noted the wide variety of technical and other issues addressed, including the need for a closer link to energy policy, the need for better coordination and harmonization among the different agencies collecting energy statistics at the national and the international level, and methodological development; and recommended that the United Nations Statistics Division convene an ad hoc expert working group to (i) outline priorities for tackling the issues discussed, (ii) identify the most appropriate forums within which to address these issues and (iii) report back to the Bureau of the Commission with an outline of a specific mandate and recommendations with a timetable;

(d) Strongly supported the proposed strategic focus for technical cooperation activities of the United Nations Statistics Division as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General on statistical capacity-building; reaffirmed the critical importance of statistical capacity-building; requested that a report be prepared regularly for the Commission, beginning with its thirty-seventh session, on the ability of countries to produce individual indicators, not imputations by international agencies, and on how metadata should be presented to accompany indicators on all Millennium Development Goals; and agreed to form a group of Friends of the Chair to define the modalities of that report and develop suggestions on processes that could be used to bridge the information gap between users and producers of Millennium Development Goal indicators and the lack of adequate data sources;

(e) Acknowledged the relevance and timeliness of the study on the factors that impeded the implementation of the *System of National Accounts, 1993* (1993 SNA) in many member countries; noted that the United Nations Statistics Division would take the lead in devising a strategy to address the impediments identified in the study; took note of the reports of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts on the updating of the 1993 SNA; and concluded that delivering the 1993 SNA, Rev.1, according to the agreed timetable, by 2008 would require focus, discipline and significant effort;

(f) Recommended the creation of an intersecretariat working group on service statistics, which would identify the division of labour among the international agencies regarding the maintenance and update of recommendations and knowledge transfer in the area of service statistics;

(g) Welcomed the start of data collection in the context of the International Comparison Programme in most of the regions and the increase in the number of participating countries;

(h) Encouraged the Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics to continue its work on developing clearer definitions for producing data on the informal sector and measuring its contribution to the gross domestic product and employment;

(i) Welcomed the efforts of the World Health Organization to address the concerns expressed by the Commission at its thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth sessions and, in that context, reaffirmed the need for a better and more effective involvement of the community of official statisticians both at the national and at the international level at all stages of the development of health statistics;

(j) Took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the progress in the preparation of the United Nations Handbook on Poverty Statistics;

(k) Endorsed the creation of a Committee on Environmental-Economic Accounting and requested that the terms of reference of the Committee be prepared and submitted to the Bureau of the Commission for approval;

(l) Welcomed the expedited efforts of the United Nations Statistics Division to keep the revision of the International Standards Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities on schedule and urged that efforts be undertaken to also keep the revision of the Central Product Classification on schedule;

(m) Took note of the work carried out by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators;

(n) Approved the changes to the programme of work of the United Nations Statistics Division for 2004-2005, as presented orally by the Director of the Statistics Division, and endorsed the programme of work of the Statistics Division for the biennium 2006-2007; and also approved the multi-year programme of work for the Commission for 2005-2008.

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Chapter I

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

A. Draft resolution for adoption by the Council

1. The Statistical Commission recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolution:

"2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme*

"*The Economic and Social Council*,

"*Recalling* its resolution 1995/7 of 19 July 1995, in which it requested the Secretary-General to proceed with the development of the 2000 World Population and Housing Census Programme and urged States Members of the United Nations to carry out population and housing censuses during the period 1995-2004, as well as its earlier resolutions endorsing previous decennial programmes,

"*Having reviewed* the efforts made by Member States to carry out population and housing censuses as part of the 2000 World Population and Housing Census Programme and also the activities of the United Nations and funding agencies in support of national efforts in that regard,

"*Recognizing* the increasing importance of the 2010 round of population and housing censuses for meeting data needs for the follow-up activities to the Millennium Summit, held in New York from 6 to 8 September 2000, the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo from 5 to 13 September 1994, the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen from 6 to 12 March 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995, and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held in Istanbul from 3 to 14 June 1996, and to other regional and national meetings,

"*Considering* the importance of the population and housing census to the preparation of a meaningful core set of national data and information necessary for socio-economic planning and governance,

"*Stressing* that, for a country as a whole and for each administrative area therein, periodic population and housing censuses are one of the primary sources of data needed for effective development planning and for the monitoring of population issues and socio-economic and environmental trends, policies and programmes,

"1. *Supports* the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme, consisting of a number of activities aimed at ensuring that Member States conduct a population and housing census at least once during the period 2005-2014;

* For the discussion, see chap. IV, paras. 7-11.

"2. *Urges* Member States to carry out a population and housing census and to disseminate census results as an essential source of information for small-area, national, regional and international planning and development and to provide census results to national stakeholders as well as the United Nations and other appropriate intergovernmental organizations to assist in studies on population, environment and socio-economic development issues and programmes;

"3. *Emphasizes* the importance of the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme for socio-economic planning, and requests increased support for this Programme;

"4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to implement the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme."

B. Draft decision for adoption by the Council

2. The Statistical Commission recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decision:

Report of the Statistical Commission on its thirty-sixth session and provisional agenda, dates and documentation for the thirty-seventh session of the Commission

The Economic and Social Council:

(a) Takes note of the report of the Statistical Commission on its thirty-sixth session;

(b) Decides that the thirty-seventh session of the Commission shall be held in New York from 7 to 10 March 2006;

(c) Approves the provisional agenda and documentation for the thirty-seventh session of the Commission as set out below.

Provisional agenda and documentation for the thirty-seventh session of the Commission

1. Election of officers.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

Documentation

Provisional agenda and annotations

Note by the Secretariat on the organization of the work of the session

Note by the Secretariat on the state of preparation of documentation for the session

3. Demographic and social statistics:

(a) Population and housing censuses;

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General

(b) Social statistics;

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General

(c) Health statistics;

Documentation

Report of the World Health Organization

(d) Paris Group on Labour and Compensation;

Documentation

Report of the Paris Group on Labour and Compensation

(e) Poverty statistics.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General

Report of the Rio Group on Poverty Statistics

4. Economic statistics:

(a) National accounts;

Documentation

Report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts

(b) Industrial statistics: programme review;

Documentation

Report of the programme reviewer

(c) Round Table on Business Survey Frames;

Documentation

Report of the Round Table on Business Survey Frames

(d) Energy statistics;

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General

(e) Distributive trade statistics;

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General

(f) International merchandise trade statistics;

Documentation

Report of the Task Force on International Merchandise Trade Statistics

(g) Tourism statistics;

Documentation

Report of the World Tourism Organization

(h) International Comparison Programme;

Documentation

Report of the World Bank

(i) Service statistics;

Documentation

Report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Service Statistics

(j) Informal sector statistics.

Documentation

Report of the Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics

5. Natural resources and environment statistics:

(a) Environment statistics;

Documentation

Report of the Inter-agency Working Group on Environment Statistics

(b) Environmental accounting.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General

Report of the London Group on Environmental Accounting

6. Activities not classified by field:

(a) Management issues in national statistical offices;

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General

(b) Statistics of human development;

Documentation

Report of the Human Development Report Office of the United Nations Development Programme

(c) International economic and social classifications;

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General

(d) Statistical capacity-building;

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General

Report of the Steering Committee of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the Twenty-first Century (PARIS 21)

(e) Indicators;

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General

Report of the Friends of the Chair

(f) Follow-up to Economic and Social Council policy decisions;

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General

(g) Coordination and integration of statistical programmes;

Documentation

Report of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities

(h) Programme questions (United Nations Statistics Division).

Documentation

Note by the Secretariat on the work programme of the Division

7. Provisional agenda and dates for the thirty-eighth session of the Commission.

8. Report of the Commission on its thirty-seventh session.

C. Matters brought to the attention of the Council

3. The attention of the Council is drawn to the decisions and recommendations of the Commission (see chap. II, para. 5; chap. III, paras. 7, 14, 21, 25, 30, 34 and 39; chap. IV, paras. 7-12, 18, 22 and 25; chap. V, paras. 7 and 9; chap. VI, paras. 13, 14, 20, 24, 25, 28, 31, 34, 37 and 41; chap. VII, para. 6; and chap. VIII, paras. 5-20).

Chapter II

Follow-up to policy decisions of the Economic and Social Council: working methods of the Statistical Commission

1. The Commission considered item 3 of its agenda at its 1st and 7th meetings, on 1 and 4 March 2005. It had before it a note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Bureau of the Commission on the review of the Commission's working methods (E/CN.3/2005/2).

2. At the 1st meeting, on 1 March, the Chairperson made an introductory statement.

3. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Japan, Cuba, Ukraine and South Africa and the observers for Jamaica (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), Canada, India and Australia. The observer for Palestine also made a statement.

4. The Director of the United Nations Statistics Division made concluding remarks.

Action taken by the Commission

5. The Commission:

(a) Took note of the suggestions made by the Bureau in its report on the review of the Commission's working methods and agreed to implement the procedures outlined in section IV thereof on a trial basis for the thirty-sixth session. The effectiveness of the procedures would be reviewed at the end of the session, when the Commission adopted its provisional agenda for 2006, and the Bureau would further analyse the experiences and take them into account in the preparation of the thirty-seventh session;

(b) Requested the Bureau to make more transparent the methodology devised to distinguish between discussion items and information items and, in that context, it was also suggested that a distinction between decision items and discussion items might be more useful;

(c) Agreed that it was preferable that the coordination of group positions should take place outside regular session time and, in that regard, the Chair was invited to facilitate discussion in accordance with the rules and procedures of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council;

(d) Decided that there was no need at present to review the terms of reference of the Commission as set out by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 1566 (L) of 3 May 1971, inasmuch as they were still considered sufficiently broad to cover the current work of the Commission.

Chapter III
Economic statistics

A. Programme review: energy statistics

1. The Commission considered item 4 (a) of its agenda at its 1st and 7th meetings, on 1 and 4 March 2005. It had before it a note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the programme reviewer (Statistics Norway) on energy statistics (E/CN.3/2005/3).

2. At the 1st meeting, on 1 March, the observer for Norway made an introductory statement.

3. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Japan, Denmark, Germany, South Africa and the United States of America and the observers for Finland, Canada, India, Australia, Jordan and Lebanon.

4. Also at the 1st meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the International Monetary Fund and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

5. At the same meeting, the observer for the International Energy Agency made a statement.

6. Also at the 1st meeting, the observer for Norway responded to points raised during the discussion and the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division made concluding remarks.

Action taken by the Commission

7. The Commission:

(a) Welcomed the excellent comprehensive report on energy statistics prepared by Statistics Norway;

(b) Noted the wide variety of technical and other issues addressed, including the need for a closer link to energy policy; the need for better coordination and harmonization among the different agencies collecting energy statistics at the national and the international level; and methodological development;

(c) Acknowledged the importance of energy statistics for all countries from both a socio-economic and an environmental perspective, noting the need to meet the international demand for energy statistics while limiting the reporting burden on countries;

(d) Reiterated the importance of quality energy statistics in terms of timeliness, coverage, reliability and transparency;

(e) Emphasized the importance of energy statistics in greenhouse gas emissions inventories, particularly in the context of the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol[1] to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;[2]

[1] FCCC/CP/1997/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.3, annex.
[2] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

(f) Stressed the need to better integrate energy statistics with other statistical systems especially those linked to economic development, environment and national accounts;

(g) Underlined the need to assist, in particular developing countries, in strengthening their capacity to produce energy statistics and to better meet the challenges presented by the liberalization of energy markets, energy efficiency, confidentiality and new forms of energy;

(h) Stressed that the exchange of best practices represented an important way forward in improving the quality of energy statistics;

(i) Recognized the Joint Oil Data Initiative as a good example of collaboration among countries and international organizations;

(j) Recommended that, given the wide range of technical and other issues covered by the programme review, the United Nations Statistics Division convene an ad hoc expert working group to:

(i) Outline priorities for tackling these issues;

(ii) Identify the most appropriate forums within which to address these issues (for example, city group, group of Friends of the Chair, intersecretariat working group), including relationships with existing bodies;

(iii) Report back to the Bureau of the Commission with an outline of a specific mandate and recommendations with a timetable;

(k) Authorized the Bureau to take forward the recommendations of the ad hoc expert working group and to ensure that the implementation of concrete measures began before the next session of the Commission.

B. National accounts

8. The Commission considered item 4 (b) of its agenda at its 2nd and 7th meetings, on 1 and 4 March 2005. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (E/CN.3/2005/4);

(b) Background document containing a progress report prepared for the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts by the manager of the project to update the *System of National Accounts, 1993* (1993 SNA);[3]

(c) Background document entitled "Manuals, handbooks and supporting materials for SNA implementation prepared by member organizations of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts (ISWGNA)".

9. At the 2nd meeting, on 1 March, introductory statements were made by the representative of the United Nations Statistics Division and the observer for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

10. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of China, Japan, South Africa, Cuba, Cape Verde, Denmark, Germany, the Russian Federation,

[3] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.XVII.4.

the Netherlands, Ukraine, the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the observers for Australia, Mauritania, Fiji, Zimbabwe, India, Mongolia and Sweden. The observer for Palestine also made a statement.

11. Also at the 2nd meeting, the representative of the International Labour Organization made a statement.

12. The observer for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division responded to points raised.

13. The Director of the United Nations Statistics Division made concluding remarks.

Action taken by the Commission

14. The Commission:

(a) Acknowledged the relevance and timeliness of the study included in the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts on the factors that impeded the implementation of the *System of National Accounts, 1993* in many member countries and endorsed the recommendations contained in paragraph 38 thereof;

(b) Recognized the need to support members in improving the infrastructure for basic data collection and promoting the use of administrative data, inter alia, through the provision of manuals on best practices;

(c) Encouraged countries to intensify advocacy and reach out to high-level users and policymakers in order to strengthen their awareness of the importance and usefulness of national accounts and thereby facilitate increased funding for the implementation of the 1993 SNA as well as the budgets of National Statistical Offices or other agencies responsible for national accounts;

(d) Noted that the United Nations Statistics Division would take the lead in devising a strategy to address the impediments to 1993 SNA implementation identified in the above-mentioned study, which should contain a focus on Africa, and, in that context, the Commission confirmed the need to improve basic data for national accounts compilation, based on best practices and taking into account the different levels of statistical development;

(e) Took note of the reports of the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts on the updating of the 1993 SNA and concluded that delivering the revision of the *System of National Accounts, 1993* (1993 SNA, Rev.1), according to the agreed timetable, by 2008 would require focus, discipline and significant effort;

(f) Recommended maintaining the existing timetable for the completion of the 1993 SNA, Rev.1, considering the close coordination of the calendars of the revisions of other macroeconomic manuals such as the Balance of Payments Manual, and the financial implications of any postponement of the completion date. Some members urged the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts to consider the prioritization of issues and contingency plans for issues that might turn

out to be intractable by applying the decision-making structure embedded in the governance structure while assuring the consistency and integrity of the 1993 SNA, Rev.1;

(g) Commended the United Nations Statistics Division on its informative website on the SNA update that had facilitated the transparency of, and the worldwide involvement of the statistical community in, the updating process.

C. Service statistics

15. The Commission considered item 4 (c) of its agenda at its 2nd and 7th meetings, on 1 and 4 March 2005. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on service statistics (E/CN.3/2005/5);

(b) Comprehensive background document prepared by OECD on service statistics coordination and strategy;

(c) Comprehensive background document prepared by the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics on its strategic vision for 2005-2008.

16. At the 2nd meeting, on 1 March, the observer for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development made an introductory statement.

17. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the United States of America, the Netherlands, Japan and Spain and the observers for Canada, Switzerland and Australia.

18. Also at the 2nd meeting, the observer for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division responded to points raised.

19. At the same meeting, the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division made concluding remarks.

20. Also at the 2nd meeting, the Chairperson made a statement.

Action taken by the Commission

21. The Commission:

(a) Took note of the report of OECD on service statistics, and the background document prepared by the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics;

(b) Recognized and credited the conceptual work of the Voorburg Group and agreed that it should continue to develop internationally comparable concepts and methods in the area of service statistics related to the measurement of output and prices and use of classifications;

(c) Reiterated the role of the Voorburg Group with respect to focusing on the submission to the Commission of the work completed on concepts and methods in the area of service statistics;

(d) Agreed that OECD should continue to coordinate international work on service statistics as mandated by the Commission in 2003 and provide a single annual report on the work undertaken by the various expert and city groups on service statistics;

(e) Recommended the creation of an intersecretariat working group on service statistics, which would identify the division of labour among the international organizations regarding the maintenance and update of recommendations, such as those arising out of the work of the Voorburg Group, and knowledge transfer in the area of service statistics, and would also promote the use of best practices.

D. Statistics of international trade in services

22. The Commission considered item 4 (d) of its agenda at its 3rd and 7th meetings, on 2 and 4 March 2005. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services (E/CN.3/2005/6);

(b) Background document prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division entitled "Minutes of the first meeting of the Technical Subgroup on the Movement of Natural Persons — Mode 4".

23. At the 3rd meeting, on 2 March, the representative of Japan made a statement.

24. At the same meeting, the representative of the World Bank also made a statement.

Action taken by the Commission

25. The Commission:

(a) Took note of the report of the Task Force on Statistics of International Trade in Services;

(b) Noted the conclusions of the International Technical Meeting on Measuring Remittances, organized jointly by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which had been held on 24 and 25 January 2005 at the World Bank, Washington, D.C.;

(c) Noted the policy interest in improving data on remittances.

E. International Comparison Programme

26. The Commission considered item 4 (e) of its agenda at its 2nd and 7th meetings, on 1 and 4 March 2005. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the World Bank on the International Comparison Programme (E/CN.3/2005/7);

(b) Background document prepared by the World Bank entitled "International Comparison Programme (ICP) status and progress report, March 1, 2005".

27. At the 2nd meeting, on 1 March, statements were made by the representative of the Russian Federation and the observer for Australia.

28. At the same meeting, the observer for the African Development Bank made a statement.

29. Also at the 2nd meeting, the representative of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia made a statement.

Action taken by the Commission

30. The Commission:

(a) Took note with thanks of the report and update of progress on the International Comparison Programme submitted by the World Bank;

(b) Welcomed the start of data collection in most of the regions and the increase in the number of participating countries, bringing the total number to over one hundred and fifty;

(c) Welcomed the actions being taken by the International Comparison Programme Executive Board, the International Comparison Programme Global Office of the World Bank and the African Regional Coordinator to ensure that price collection commenced in Africa as soon as possible;

(d) Expressed satisfaction with the positive outlook for producing preliminary results by the end of 2006 in accordance with the current timetable;

(e) Acknowledged the contributions of the Global Office, regional coordinators, participating countries, the Executive Board and the International Comparison Programme Technical Advisory Group to the efforts towards implementing the programme.

F. Price statistics

31. The Commission considered item 4 (f) of its agenda at its 3rd and 7th meetings on 2 and 4 March 2005. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Ottawa Group on Price Indexes (E/CN.3/2005/8);

(b) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics (E/CN.3/2005/9).

32. At the 3rd meeting, on 2 March, statements were made by the representatives of the United States of America, New Zealand and South Africa and the observers for Canada and Australia.

33. The Director of the United Nations Statistics Division also made a statement.

Action taken by the Commission

34. The Commission:

(a) Took note of the reports of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Price Statistics and the Ottawa Group on Price Indexes;

(b) Noted the existence of classification schemes related to electronic commerce, such as the Universal Standard Products and Services Classification (UNSPSC), and supported the proposal of the Ottawa Group that the United Nations Statistics Division investigate its potential as a "derived" classification and consider the establishment of correspondence tables with existing international statistical classifications, while taking note of the limitations of the Universal Standard Products and Services Classification, as noted by some delegations.

G. Informal sector statistics

35. The Commission considered item 4 (g) of its agenda at its 3rd and 7th meetings, on 2 and 4 March 2005. It had before it a note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics (E/CN.3/2005/10).

36. At the 3rd meeting, on 2 March, statements were made by the representative of Algeria and the observers for Fiji, India and Jordan. The observer for Palestine also made a statement.

37. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the International Labour Organization and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

38. Also at the 3rd meeting, the representative of the United Nations Statistics Division made a statement.

Action taken by the Commission

39. The Commission:

(a) Took note of the report of the Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics;

(b) Encouraged the Delhi Group to continue its work on developing clearer definitions for producing data on the informal sector and measuring its contribution to the gross domestic product and employment;

(c) Noted with satisfaction that the Intersecretariat Working Group on National Accounts would actively seek collaboration with the Delhi Group to improve the presentation of the concept of the informal sector in the updated 1993 SNA;

(d) Suggested that the Delhi Group study the social aspects of the informal sector to supplement its current focus on the economic dimension.

Chapter IV
Demographic and social statistics

A. Population and housing censuses

1. The Commission considered item 5 (a) of its agenda at its 3rd, 5th and 7th meetings, from 2 to 4 March 2005. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on population and housing censuses (E/CN.3/2005/11 and Corr.1).

2. At the 3rd meeting, on 2 March, the representative of the United Nations Statistics Division made an introductory statement.

3. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the Netherlands, Mexico, Japan, Ghana, Denmark, Cuba, Costa Rica, Colombia, Cape Verde, South Africa, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, the United States of America, Kenya, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Ukraine and Algeria and the observers for Uganda, Norway, France, Ireland, Argentina (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Southern Common Market), Jordan, Qatar, Egypt, Zambia, Thailand and the Syrian Arab Republic. The observer for Palestine also made a statement.

4. Also at the 3rd meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia and the United Nations Population Fund.

5. At the same meeting, the observer for the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics also made a statement.

6. Also at the 3rd meeting, the representative of the United Nations Statistics Division made concluding remarks.

Action taken by the Commission

2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme

7. At the 5th meeting, on 3 March, the representative of Japan, on behalf of Australia,[1] China, Denmark, Ghana, Japan, Mexico, South Africa and the United States of America, introduced a draft resolution (E/CN.3/2005/L.3) entitled "2010 World Population and Census Programme". Subsequently, Colombia and Costa Rica joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

8. At the 7th meeting, on 4 March, the representative of Japan made a statement with regard to the draft resolution.

9. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Colombia (on behalf of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Mexico), the Netherlands and Japan and the observer for France.

10. Also at the 7th meeting, the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division responded to points raised.

[1] In accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

11. At the same meeting, the Commission recommended draft resolution E/CN.3/2005/L.3 for adoption by the Economic and Social Council (see chap. I, sect. A).

Action taken by the Commission

Population and housing censuses

12. The Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on population and housing censuses and endorsed the recommendations of the United Nations Symposium on Population and Housing Censuses and the United Nations Expert Group meeting to Review Critical Issues Relevant to the Planning of the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses, as presented in the report;

(b) In the process of implementing the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme, requested:

(i) That the United Nations Statistics Division, in its role as the secretariat of the Programme, act as the umbrella organization for setting standards, providing technical expertise and training and setting priorities as needed;

(ii) That the umbrella strategy evolve around regional arrangements to the fullest possible extent, as those arrangements provided a flexible framework for developing regionally comparable statistics, sharing knowledge and resources, and taking into account regionally relevant issues;

(c) Requested that the United Nations Statistics Division proceed with its work on the revision and update of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses* through the United Nations Expert Group on the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses and its working groups and technical subgroups, and specifically address the following issues:

(i) The need to assess the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through census data;

(ii) The appropriateness of the use of emerging approaches, such as population registers and surveys;

(iii) The need to address the issue of the application of information and communication technologies (ICT) and its sustainability;

(iv) The need to articulate the utilization of census results in order to make census value more visible and the use of data more diversified;

(v) The need to address the issue of public trust in safekeeping the privacy of data providers;

(vi) The application of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) in both collection and dissemination of data;

(d) Noted with appreciation the establishment of the Population and Housing Census Trust Fund coordinated by the United Nations Statistics Division, which would be used, according to regional needs, to bridge the distances between national statistical offices in their exchange of resources and support;

(e) Noted with satisfaction that the work on the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme was closely coordinated with regional initiatives and that those regional concerns were taken into consideration;

(f) Noted with concern the statement contained in paragraph 27 of the above-mentioned report of the Secretary-General that the Economic Commission for Africa had reported that currently it was not undertaking activities directly related to population and housing censuses. The United Nations Statistics Division needed to explore the possibility of maintaining a focus on Africa in the context of the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme;

(g) Requested that the United Nations Statistics Division report to the Commission at its thirty-seventh session on the activities described in paragraphs (b) to (g) above.

B. Health statistics

13. The Commission considered item 5 (b) of its agenda at its 4th and 7th meetings, on 2 and 4 March 2005. It had before it a note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the World Health Organization on health statistics (E/CN.3/2005/12).

14. At the 4th meeting, on 2 March, the representative of the World Health Organization made an introductory statement.

15. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the United States of America, Japan, Germany, Mexico, New Zealand and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the observers for Lebanon, Mauritania, Canada, Tajikistan, Thailand, Switzerland and Australia. The observer for Palestine also made a statement.

16. Also at the 4th meeting, the observer for the European Community made a statement.

17. At the same meeting, the representative of the World Health Organization responded to points raised and the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division made concluding remarks.

Action taken by the Commission

18. The Commission:

(a) Welcomed the efforts of the World Health Organization to address the concerns expressed by the Commission at its thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth sessions and, in that context, reaffirmed the need for a better and more effective involvement of the community of official statisticians both at the national and at the international level at all stages of the development of health statistics;

(b) Stressed the need for the Intersecretariat Working Group on Health Statistics to continue its work on a coordinated and integrated agenda for the production of health statistics and to agree on standard definitions, classifications and methodologies in health statistics; asked for a stronger involvement of country experts in the work of the Intersecretariat Working Group; and agreed that, given its

expertise in the subject matter, the World Health Organization was best suited to lead the work of the Intersecretariat Working Group;

(c) Welcomed the announcement made by the World Health Organization that it would make available a timetable regarding the planned release of microdata from the World Health Survey (2002-2003) and, in that context, the Commission stressed the need for good metadata to accompany the publication of the data;

(d) Recognized that the Health Metrics Network offered a promising approach to strengthening health information systems, in particular those of developing countries; it noted, however, that the Network was not the appropriate forum for a strategic review of international programmes on the production of health statistics, as called for by the Commission.

C. Poverty statistics

19. The Commission considered item 5 (c) of its agenda at its 4th and 7th meetings, on 2 and 4 March 2005. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on poverty statistics (E/CN.3/2005/13).

20. At the 4th meeting, on 2 March, statements were made by the observers for Australia, Lebanon, Mauritania, Brazil (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Rio Group), Finland and Malawi. The observer for Palestine also made a statement.

21. At the same meeting, the observer for Brazil (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Rio Group) responded to a question raised by the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division.

Action taken by the Commission

22. The Commission:

(a) Took note of the report of the Secretary General on the progress in the preparation of the United Nations Handbook on Poverty Statistics and recognized that while the current scope of the Handbook was adequate, there might be a need for future work for the purpose of addressing new emerging, aspects of poverty;

(b) Welcomed the proposed follow-up activities and future work envisioned by the United Nations Statistics Division in the area of poverty statistics, in particular in the area of capacity-building;

(c) Took note of the announcement of the Rio Group that it would publish a Compendium on Poverty Statistics in 2005 and the Commission noted that the Compendium and the Handbook would be complementary and that the Rio Group intended to conclude its work in 2005.

D. Disability statistics

23. The Commission considered item 5 (d) of its agenda at its 4th and 7th meetings, on 2 and 4 March 2005. It had before it a note by the Secretary-General

transmitting the report of the Washington Group on Disability Statistics (E/CN.3/2005/14).

24. At the 4th meeting, on 2 March, the representative of the United States of America made a statement.

Action taken by the Commission

25. The Commission took note of the report of the Washington Group on Disability Statistics and acknowledged and thanked the World Bank for the grant to support the activities of the Group. The funds would facilitate the participation of many more developing countries in the activities of the Group. In addition, the grant would be used in the process of developing disability measures that would generate comparable data, to pay for the testing of protocols in selected countries in every region of the world.

Chapter V
Natural resources and environment statistics

A. Environmental accounting

1. The Commission considered item 6 (a) of its agenda at its 4th and 7th meetings, on 2 and 4 March 2005. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on environmental-economic accounting (E/CN.3/2005/15);

(b) Background document, prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division, containing the report of the Meeting on Environmental-Economic Accounting held in Copenhagen on 20 and 21 September 2004.

2. At the 4th meeting, on 2 March, the representative of the United Nations Statistics Division made an introductory statement.

3. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Germany, Algeria, the Netherlands, Japan, Spain and New Zealand and the observers for Lebanon, France, Mongolia, Australia and Canada. The observer for Palestine also made a statement.

4. Also at the 4th meeting, statements were made by the observers for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the European Community.

5. At the same meeting, the representative of the Economic Commission for Europe also made a statement.

6. Also at the 4th meeting, the representative of the United Nations Statistics Division responded to points raised and the Director of the Statistics Division made concluding remarks.

Action taken by the Commission

7. The Commission:

(a) Endorsed the creation of a Committee on Environmental-Economic Accounting and noted that the Committee should be regarded as having a programme of work with a long-term perspective;

(b) Recognized the potential of the Committee in mainstreaming environmental accounting;

(c) Expressed its appreciation for the good work being carried out by the London Group on Environmental Accounting and reconfirmed its role as an expert body in charge of methodological issues, which would support the work of the Committee;

(d) Noted the complementarities of the Committee on Environmental-Economic Accounting and the Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics;

(e) Requested that the terms of reference of the Committee be prepared and submitted to the Bureau of the Commission for approval, taking into consideration the terms of reference of the London Group and the Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics so as to avoid overlap and ensure close collaboration mechanisms among the three main groups;

(f) Stressed the importance of promoting environmental accounting in the users' community and taking on board users' needs;

(g) Recognized the need for assisting countries in the implementation of environmental-economic accounting through the development of detailed compilation manuals and coordinated technical assistance programmes;

(h) Stressed the need for those developments to proceed in parallel with the improvement of environment statistics.

B. Environment statistics

8. The Commission considered item 6 (b) of its agenda at its 4th and 7th meetings, on 2 and 4 March 2005. It had before it a note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics (E/CN.3/2005/16).

Action taken by the Commission

9. The Commission took note of the report of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Environment Statistics concerning the work implemented in 2004 and its plan of work for 2005-2006.

Chapter VI
Activities not classified by field

A. Statistical capacity-building

1. The Commission considered item 7 (a) of its agenda at its 5th, 7th and 8th meetings, on 3 and 4 March 2005. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on statistical capacity-building (E/CN.3/2005/17);

(b) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the Twenty-first Century on statistical capacity-building (E/CN.3/2005/18).

2. At the 5th meeting, on 3 March, the Officer-in-Charge of the Statistical Services Branch, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, made an introductory statement.

3. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Ghana, Germany, South Africa, the United States of America, Mexico and Cape Verde and the observers for Lebanon, Egypt, Mauritania, India, Uganda, Italy, Jordan, Jamaica, Australia, Norway, Chile, Fiji and Zimbabwe. The observer for Palestine also made a statement.

4. Also at the 5th meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

5. At the same meeting, statements were also made by the observers for the European Community, the Asian Development Bank and the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics.

6. Also at the 5th meeting, the Officer-in-Charge of the Statistical Services Branch made concluding remarks, following which a statement was made by the representative of New Zealand.

7. At the same meeting, the observer for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (as Manager of the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the Twenty-first Century) made a statement introducing the report of the Partnership.

8. Also at the 5th meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Japan, Ukraine, the United States of America and Mexico and the observers for Canada, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mauritania, Zambia, Australia, Jordan, Trinidad and Tobago and Chile.

9. At the same meeting, the representative of the Economic Commission for Europe made a statement.

10. Also at the 5th meeting, the observer for the European Community made a statement.

11. At the same meeting, the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division made concluding remarks.

12. Also at the 5th meeting, the observer for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development made a statement.

Action taken by the Commission

13. The Commission:

(a) Strongly supported the proposed strategic focus for technical cooperation activities of the United Nations Statistics Division as set out in paragraph 14 of the report of the Secretary-General on statistical capacity-building;

(b) Reaffirmed the critical importance of statistical capacity-building, especially in the context of increased national and international demand for development information;

(c) Stressed the need for technical cooperation to be demand-driven, responsive to local conditions, nationally controlled and better coordinated and, in that context, recognized that there was a role for the United Nations Statistics Division to play in donor coordination; however, given past experiences, the Commission recommended that the Statistics Division, together with the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities, carefully review what coordination mechanisms would be most suitable and effective;

(d) Noted the effectiveness of the regional and subregional approach to statistical capacity-building programmes which allowed for the exchange of practical experiences relevant for the local socio-economic context and also noted that some countries that did not belong to subregional groupings might require special attention;

(e) Emphasized the importance of strengthening statistical training centres and supporting in-house training, as part of a sustained statistical capacity-building effort, and, in that context, noted the need for training on management and programme planning skills alongside training in substantive statistical areas;

(f) Requested that a report be prepared regularly for the Commission, beginning with its thirty-seventh session, on the ability of countries to produce individual indicators, not imputations by international agencies, and on how metadata should be presented to accompany indicators on all Millennium Development Goals;

(g) Agreed to form a group of Friends of the Chair to define the modalities of that report and develop suggestions on processes that could be used to bridge the information gap between users and producers of Millennium Development Goal indicators and the lack of adequate data sources. The Bureau of the Commission, in consultation with members of the Commission, would approve the membership and terms of reference of the group, with due regard for the need of balanced representation from developed and developing countries and for the need of transparency of the working methods. The Commission also agreed on the need for the recommendations of the Friends of the Chair to be taken to the Commission;

(h) Welcomed the activities of Partnership in Statistics for Development in the Twenty-first Century in supporting statistical capacity-building in developing countries;

(i) Agreed on the usefulness of national statistical development strategies but cautioned that efforts to formulate such strategies should not take away resources needed for core statistical activities or constitute an end in itself and, furthermore, stressed that those strategies should be flexible enough to accommodate local needs.

14. For the discussion on other action taken by the Commission under item 7 (a), see chapter VIII, paragraphs 5-20.

B. International economic and social classifications

15. The Commission considered item 7 (b) of its agenda at its 6th and 7th meetings, on 3 and 4 March 2005. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on international economic and social classifications (E/CN.3/2005/19).

16. At the 6th meeting, on 3 March, the observer for Australia made a statement.

17. At the same meeting, the observer for the European Community also made a statement.

18. Also at the 6th meeting, the representatives of the United Nations Statistics Division responded to points raised.

19. At the same meeting, the representative of the International Labour Organization made a statement.

Action taken by the Commission

20. The Commission:

(a) Welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on international economic and social classifications and noted its appreciation of the progress documented in that report regarding the 2007 round of classifications revisions;

(b) Also welcomed the expedited efforts of the United Nations Statistics Division to keep the revision of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities on schedule in the period leading up to the next meeting of the United Nations Expert Group on International Economic and Social Classifications in June 2005 and thanked the participants in its Technical Subgroup for facilitating that effort;

(c) Noted that the deadlines in the revision processes of the International Standard Industrial Classification and the Central Product Classification were highly important for the revision processes of other classifications and urged that efforts be undertaken to also keep the revision of the Central Product Classification on schedule;

(d) Supported the revision work being undertaken on the International Standard Classification of Occupations;

(e) Noted with concern that a technical expert group was no longer being convened to assist in the revision process of the International Standard Classification of Occupations and, while noting the alternative mechanism employed by the International Labour Organization through the use of the United Nations Expert Group on International Economic and Social Classifications, still urged the International Labour Organization to establish such a group.

C. Indicators for follow-up to United Nations conferences

21. The Commission considered item 7 (c) of its agenda at its 5th, 7th and 8th meetings, on 3 and 4 March 2005. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on the indicators for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals and for follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields (E/CN.3/2005/20);

(b) Room document entitled "Perspectives on actions needed for the improvement of country data for MDG indicators", prepared by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators.

22. At the 5th meeting, on 3 March, statements were made by the representatives of China (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77), the Islamic Republic of Iran, South Africa, the Netherlands and the Russian Federation and the observer for India.

23. At the same meeting, the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division responded to points raised.

Action taken by the Commission

24. The Commission:

(a) Took note of the work carried out by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators, coordinated by the United Nations Statistics Division, and the advances made by the Group in compiling indicators for global monitoring. It also noted that many countries still lacked the capacity to produce the necessary data and that a review of indicators currently being produced at the national level was necessary for all Millennium Development Goals;

(b) Noted that this was an opportunity to inform the policymakers of the realistic level of statistical capacity in producing the Millennium Development Goal indicators and their quality at country level for all Millennium Development Goals;

(c) Took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the indicators for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals and for follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields.

25. For the discussion on other action taken by the Commission under item 7 (c), see chapter VIII, paragraphs 5-20.

D. Presentation of statistical data and metadata

26. The Commission considered item 7 (d) of its agenda at its 6th and 7th meetings, on 3 and 4 March 2005. It had before it a note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development on the presentation of statistical data and metadata (E/CN.3/2005/21).

27. At the 6th meeting, on 3 March, the observer for Austria made a statement.

Action taken by the Commission

28. The Commission took note of the discussion on the proposed Data and Metadata Reporting and Presentation Handbook contained in the report of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development on the presentation of statistical data and metadata.

E. Common open standards for the exchange and sharing of data and metadata

29. The Commission considered item 7 (e) of its agenda at its 6th and 7th meetings, on 3 and 4 March 2005. It had before it a note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the task force to establish standards on data and metadata exchange on common open standards for the exchange and sharing of socio-economic data and metadata: the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange initiative (E/CN.3/2005/22).

30. At the 6th meeting, on 3 March, the representative of South Africa made a statement.

Action taken by the Commission

31. The Commission took note of the report of the task force to establish standards on data and metadata exchange.

F. Information and communication technologies statistics

32. The Commission considered item 7 (f) of its agenda at its 6th and 7th meetings, on 3 and 4 March 2005. It had before it a note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Partnership on Measuring Information and Communication Technologies for Development (E/CN.3/2005/23).

33. At the 6th meeting, on 3 March, statements were made by the representatives of Japan and Mexico and the observer for Finland.

Action taken by the Commission

34. The Commission took note of the report of the Partnership on Measuring Information and Communication Technologies for Development.

G. Coordination and integration of statistical programmes

35. The Commission considered item 7 (g) of its agenda at its 6th and 7th meetings, on 3 and 4 March 2005. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities on its third and fourth meetings (E/CN.3/2005/24);

(b) Room paper prepared by the Statistician General of Statistics South Africa.

36. At the 6th meeting, on 3 March, the representative of South Africa made a statement and the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division responded to a point raised.

Action taken by the Commission

37. The Commission:

(a) Took note of the report of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities on its third and fourth meetings;

(b) Having taken note of the recommendations regarding the use of national data by international organizations contained in the room paper presented by South Africa, asked the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities to review the recommendations and put forward a proposal to the Bureau of the Commission on further steps to be taken.

H. Programme questions (United Nations Statistics Division)

38. The Commission considered item 7 (h) of its agenda at its 7th meeting, on 4 March 2005. It had before it a note by the Secretariat transmitting the draft programme of work of the United Nations Statistics Division for the biennium 2006-2007 (E/CN.3/2005/25).

39. At the 7th meeting, the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division made an introductory statement and reported to the Commission on changes to the work programme of the Statistics Division for 2004-2005.

40. At the same meeting, the representative of New Zealand made a statement.

Action taken by the Commission

41. The Commission:

(a) Approved the changes to the work programme of the United Nations Statistics Division for 2004-2005, as presented orally by the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division, endorsing in particular:

(i) The shift from the planned revised System of Environmental and Economic Accounting (SEEA) software to the elaboration of a website on environmental-economic accounting;

(ii) The replacement of the Manual on Tourism and Environmental Accounting by a Manual on Water Accounting;

(iii) The shift of the production of International Merchandise Trade Statistics (CD-ROM) from the United Nations Statistics Division to the International Trade Centre; under a memorandum of understanding, the Statistics Division would make the data available to the International Trade Centre;

(iv) The reconfiguration of the United Nations Statistics Newsletter: the bimonthly static publications in electronic and print format would be replaced by a "what's new" section which would appear on the United Nations Statistics Division website and would be continuously updated. In addition, brief summaries of the "what's new" section would be disseminated in printed format;

(b) Endorsed the programme of work of the United Nations Statistics Division for the biennium 2006-2007.

Chapter VII

Provisional agenda and dates for the thirty-seventh session of the Commission

1. The Commission considered item 8 of its agenda at its 7th meeting, on 4 March 2005. It had before it the following documents:

(a) Note by the Secretariat containing the provisional agenda and dates for the thirty-seventh session of the Commission (E/CN.3/2005/L.2);

(b) Note by the Secretary-General containing the draft multi-year programme of work for the Commission for 2005-2008 (E/CN.3/2005/26).

2. At the 7th meeting, the Officer-in-Charge of the Statistical Services Branch, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, introduced and orally revised the provisional agenda for the thirty-seventh session of the Commission and the draft multi-year programme of work for the Commission for 2005-2008.

3. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of New Zealand, Ukraine and Algeria and the observers for Finland, India and Canada. The observer for Palestine also made a statement.

4. Also at the 7th meeting, the representative of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean made a statement.

5. At the same meeting, the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division responded to points raised.

Action taken by the Commission

6. The Commission:

(a) Approved the provisional agenda and documentation for its thirty-seventh session as contained in document E/CN.3/2005/L.2 and as orally amended, subject to review and finalization by its Bureau; in this context, the Commission asked its Bureau to take the ongoing debate on improved working methods into account;

(b) Recommended that its thirty-seventh session be held in New York from 7 to 10 March 2006;

(c) Approved the multi-year programme of work for the Commission for 2005-2008 as orally amended and recommended that the topic for the programme review in 2007 be education statistics.

Chapter VIII
Report of the Commission on its thirty-sixth session

1. The Commission considered item 9 of its agenda at its 7th and 8th meetings, on 4 March 2005.

2. At the 7th meeting, on 4 March, the Rapporteur introduced the draft report of the Commission on its thirty-sixth session (E/CN.5/2005/L.4) and two informal papers.

3. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the United States of America, Cuba, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Denmark, Colombia and New Zealand and the observers for India, Canada, Jamaica (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), Jordan, Zimbabwe, Lebanon and Egypt.

4. Also at the 7th meeting, the Director of the United Nations Statistics Division and the Chairperson responded to points raised.

Action taken by the Commission

5. At the 8th meeting, on 4 March, the Rapporteur informed the Commission of the outcome of informal consultations held on a text on the action taken by the Commission under item 7 (c) of its agenda, which read:

> "The Commission:
>
> "(a) Took note of the work carried out by the Inter-agency and Expert Group on MDG Indicators, coordinated by the United Nations Statistics Division, and the advances made by the Group in compiling indicators for global monitoring. It also noted that many countries still lacked the capacity to produce the necessary data and that a review of indicators currently being produced at the national level was necessary;
>
> "(b) Noted that this was an opportunity to inform the policymakers of the realistic level of statistical capacity in producing the Millennium Development Goal indicators and their quality at country level;
>
> "(c) Requested that a report be prepared regularly for the Commission, beginning with its thirty-seventh session, on the ability of countries to produce individual indicators, not imputations by international agencies, and on how metadata should be presented to accompany Millennium Development Goal Indicators, especially indicators related to Goal 8;
>
> "(d) Agreed to form a group of Friends of the Chair to define the modalities of that report and develop suggestions on processes that could be used to bridge the information gap between users and producers of Millennium Development Goal indicators and the lack of adequate data sources. The Bureau of the Commission would approve the membership and terms of reference of the group."

6. At the same meeting, the representative of the United States of America proposed to amend paragraph (c) by deleting the words "especially indicators related to Goal 8".

7. Also at the 8th meeting, the observer for Jamaica[1] (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China) and the representative of Cuba proposed amendments to the text by which:

(a) The words "for all Millennium Development Goals" would be added at the end of paragraphs (a) and (b);

(b) In paragraph (c), the words "Millennium Development Goal indicators" would be replaced by the words "indicators on all Millennium Development Goals";

(c) Paragraph (d) would be modified to read:

"Agreed to form a group of Friends of the Chair to define the modalities of that report and develop suggestions on processes that could be used to bridge the information gap between users and producers of Millennium Development Goal indicators and the lack of adequate data sources. The Bureau of the Commission, in consultation with members of the Commission, would approve the membership and terms of reference of the group, with due regard for the need of balanced representation from developed and developing countries and for the need of transparency of the working methods. The Commission also agreed on the need for the recommendations of the Friends of the Chair to be taken to the Commission";

(d) Paragraphs (c) and (d), as amended, would be incorporated in the text on action taken by the Commission under item 7 (a) of its agenda, entitled "Statistical capacity-building".

8. At the same meeting, the observer for Canada made a statement.

9. Also at the 8th meeting, the representative of the United States of America requested a vote on his proposed amendment to paragraph (c).

10. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of South Africa, Cuba and Germany and the observer for Jamaica (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China).

11. Also at the 8th meeting, the Commission adopted the amendment to paragraph (c) proposed by the representative of the United States of America by a roll-call vote of 11 to 10, with 2 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour:

Croatia, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Against:

Algeria, Cape Verde, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ghana, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kenya, South Africa.

Abstaining:

Mexico, Russian Federation.

[1] In accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

12. Before the vote on the amendment, the representative of Ghana made a statement; after the vote on the amendment, the representative of the Russian Federation made a statement.

13. Following a brief suspension of the meeting, the representative of Cuba and the observer for Jamaica (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China) made statements of clarification on their proposed amendments to paragraphs (a) to (d).

14. The representative of the United States of America requested a vote on the proposed amendments and made a statement in explanation of vote.

15. The Commission adopted the amendments by a roll-call vote of 22 to 1, with 1 abstention. The voting was as follows:

In favour:

Algeria, Cape Verde, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Denmark, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, South Africa, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Against:

United States of America.

Abstaining:

Russian Federation.

16. Also at the 8th meeting, the representative of the United States of America proposed that the Commission should not adopt its draft report on its thirty-sixth session and requested a vote on his proposal.

17. At the same meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Cuba, South Africa and New Zealand.

18. Also at the 8th meeting, the Commission rejected the proposal made by the representative of the United States of America and adopted its draft report, as amended during the discussion, by a roll-call vote of 23 to 1. The voting was as follows:

In favour:

United States of America.

Against:

Algeria, Cape Verde, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Denmark, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, South Africa, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

19. At the same meeting, the Commission agreed to entrust the Rapporteur with finalizing the report.

20. After the vote on the proposal, statements were made by the representative of the United States of America and the observers for Jamaica (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China) and Luxembourg (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union).

Chapter IX
Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

1. The Statistical Commission held its thirty-sixth session at United Nations Headquarters from 1 to 4 March 2005. The Commission held 8 meetings (1st to 8th).

B. Attendance

2. The session was attended by representatives of 24 States members of the Commission. Observers for other States Members of the United Nations and for non-member States, representatives of organizations of the United Nations system and observers for intergovernmental, non-governmental and other organizations also attended. A list of participants is contained in document E/CN.3/2005/INF/1.

C. Election of officers

3. At its 1st meeting, on 1 March 2005, the Commission elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairperson:
Katherine Wallman (United States of America)

Vice-Chairpersons:
Grace Bediako (Ghana)
Li Deshui (China)
Vladimir Sokolin (Russian Federation)

Rapporteur:
Gilberto Calvillo Vives (Mexico)

D. Agenda and organization of work

4. At its first meeting, on 1 March 2005, the Commission adopted its provisional agenda as contained in document E/CN.3/2005/1. The agenda read as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Follow-up to policy decisions of the Economic and Social Council: working methods of the Statistical Commission.
4. Economic statistics:
   (a) Programme review: energy statistics;
   (b) National accounts;
   (c) Service statistics;
   (d) Statistics of international trade in services;
   (e) International Comparison Programme;

(f) Price statistics;

(g) Informal sector statistics.

5. Demographic and social statistics:

(a) Population and housing censuses;

(b) Health statistics;

(c) Poverty statistics;

(d) Disability statistics.

6. Natural resources and environment statistics:

(a) Environmental accounting;

(b) Environment statistics.

7. Activities not classified by field:

(a) Statistical capacity-building;

(b) International economic and social classifications;

(c) Indicators for follow-up to United Nations conferences;

(d) Presentation of statistical data and metadata;

(e) Common open standards for the exchange and sharing of data and metadata;

(f) Information and communication technologies statistics;

(g) Coordination and integration of statistical programmes;

(h) Programme questions (United Nations Statistics Division).

8. Provisional agenda and dates for the thirty-seventh session of the Commission.

9. Report of the Commission on its thirty-sixth session.

5. At the same meeting, the Commission approved the organization of work of the session (E/CN.3/2005/L.1).

6. Also at its 1st meeting, the Commission invited the following organizations to participate as observers at the thirty-sixth session: Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics; Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries; Bank for International Settlements; and International Energy Agency.

E. Documentation

7. The documents before the Commission at its thirty-sixth session are listed on the website of the Statistics Division (http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/sc2005.htm).

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